DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 347 660 EA 024 105

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TITLE California Administrative Burnout and Year-Round Schools.
PUB DATE Feb 92
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association for Year-Round Education (San Diego, CA, February 8-13, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Responsibility; Administrator Role; *Burnout; Elementary Education; Extended School Year; *Principals; School Schedules; *Stress Variables; *Year Round Schools
IDENTIFIERS *California

ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that explored differences in the degree and type of burnout experienced by California elementary school principals are presented in this paper. Data were derived from a survey that was mailed to a stratified random sample of 200 California elementary principals--100 from year-round and 100 from traditional-calendar schools. Both year-round and traditional calendar principals reported low levels of burnout, with the exception of those who had preschool children living at home. Traditional calendar principals experienced greater stress related to compliance with state, federal, and organizational policies. A conclusion is that year-round school conditions do not lead to higher principal burnout. However, when compared to the overall working population, California elementary principals had lower scores in the areas of personal accomplishment and depersonalization. Seventeen tables are included. (11 references) (LMI)

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"California Administrative Burnout and Year-Round Schools"

A Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association for Year-Round Education Conference

February 11, 1992

by

D. Ann French, Ed D.

EA 024 105

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Albert Camus is quoted in The Myth of Sisyphus as saying "Without work all life goes rotten. But when work is souless, life stifles and dies." Today I am going to present the findings of a study which I conducted in 1989, which examined the burnout of California public elementary school principals working under a traditional calendar and those working under a year-round plan and discuss coping strategies which have been reported to successfully relieve stress.

In order to ascertain whether the results of my study agree with the stressful activities which you encounter, please complete the following questionnaire:

THE TEN MOST STRESSFUL ACTIVITIES OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Please answer the following questions.

I am currently an elementary school principal. Yes _____ No _____

I have been an elementary school principal. Yes _____ No _____

I believe the ten most stressful activities of an elementary school principal, in the order of their severity, are:

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

6th

7th

8th

9th

10th

Do you believe there is a difference between the burnout among California elementary school principals on a traditional calendar and those on a year-round schedule? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, do you believe that elementary YRS principals experience more burnout? Yes _____ No _____

Now that you have had a chance to register your stressful activities and state your prediction on the outcome of my study, review the purposes of my study.

1. to ascertain whether there is a difference in the levels of perceived burnout between elementary school principals working under a traditional calendar and those working under a year-round education plan.

2. to determine whether there are differences in the rankings of stressful administrative activities between the two aforementioned groups.

3. to discover whether there are specific occupational stress factors which are associated with principal burnout more than others and if so, to conclude whether they differ for each group.

The salient terms used in this study were as follows:

Burnout. Burnout is a state of physical and/or psychological exhaustion brought about by unrelieved, excessive occupational distress which may be accompanied by feelings of decreased accomplishment and a sense of depersonalization toward students.

Depersonalization. When individuals have persistent feelings of distance and isolation from their fellow workers and clients they are experiencing depersonalization.

Elementary Public School. Elementary public schools are institutions of learning financed by public funds which may

include grades kindergarten to sixth or a combination of these grades. For example, one school might have first grade through third, while another school has fourth grade through sixth or a school could have kindergarten through sixth grade and still be considered elementary schools for the purpose of this study.

Emotional Exhaustion. When an individual has pervasive feelings of being depleted of emotional energy by his/her occupational endeavors, he/she can be said to be experiencing emotional exhaustion.

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Christina Maslach and Susan Jackson collaborated on this assessment battery which measures burnout. Its protocol is entitled "Educators Survey" in order to disassociate it from the word burnout. It is thought that if the respondents knew that they were being surveyed for burnout, they might respond differently than if they are unaware of this fact.

Personal Accomplishment. When a person has pervasive feelings of individual success with his/her work in a helping profession, he/she can be said to be experiencing personal accomplishment.

Stress. Stress is an individual's response of either eustress or distress due to an atypical environmental change. This response is based on the individual's perception of the change and his/her assessment of his/her ability to satisfactorily function in relationship to the change.

Stressor. A stressor is an occupational situation that evokes stress reactions in the worker.

Year-Round Education and Year-Round School (YRE and YRS). In order to be classified as YRE or a YRS, the school must have block or staggered attendance schedules with its population

divided into any number of groups that may vary their attendance dates throughout the calendar year at the same school site. The physical plant is used for educational purposes throughout all four seasons of the year.

What is the difference, then, between stress and burnout? The concept of burnout can be traced from its distant origins in stress research to its more recent developments in occupational stress. Dr. Hans Selye has been called the father of stress research. He stated in his book The Stress of Life that the simplest, most generally accepted definition of stress is "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it." These early studies of stress emphasized the physiological symptoms of stress. Later ones shifted the emphasis to occupational stress and its physiological manifestations. Dr. Herbert Fredudenberger fathered the concept of burnout and coined the term burnout in 1974. The etymology of the word comes from the space age usage with respect to rocket stages. Burnout has also been called stress burnout, professional burnout, job burnout and excessive distress. The definitions of burnout have a broad range of modifiers and synonyms include meltdown, tedium, occupational fatigue, job strain, professional stagnation, occupational stress, melancholy overwork and overload. However, burnout refers to neither a physical illness nor a neurosis, but is rather a predominately psychological state when people have lost their motivation and will to work.

Burnout is a progressive syndrome which begins with moderate symptoms and develops into more severe ones. J. W. Johnson's theory which deals exclusively with the psychological aspects

of burnout traces the burnout cycle as follows: change leads to psychological loss which progresses to anger turned inward which results in depression.

Occupational stressors may be categorized as physical environmental, intrapersonal, interpersonal and organization. In general, moderate levels of stressors, as is the case with stress, tend to be advantageous to work production; whereas, extremely low or high levels tend to produce distress and relate to unproductive work outcomes.

Physical environmental stressors more than other types of occupational stressors, may directly result in physical injury and are more often related to "blue collar" workers. Examples of physical environmental stressors include: uncomfortable working conditions involving temperature and humidity, light, and excessive noise and vibration.

Intrapersonal stressors may include barriers to the attainment of personal career goals, role ambiguity, and role conflict. Examples of barriers to the attainment of personal career goals are inadequate promotion policies, real or imagined redundancy/obsolescenc of the job and lack of job security. These stressors affect male workers in the midcareer years of forty to fifty more frequently than men or women at other ages. The common manifestation of these stressors is job dissatisfaction.

Role ambiguity exists when the worker lacks clarity about the work expectations and job description. When there are questions about the scope and responsibilities of the position increased tension may result.

Role conflict exists when an individual struggles between

the demands of the job and personal convictions and goals. An example of this is a woman who wants to have successful career and to be a good mother at the same time. The demands of the job may interfere with the demands of being a mother. When this happens, role conflict is present.

Examples of interpersonal stressors include high or low or unfair competition, communication difficulties, and discrimination and or/ tokenism. Of these communication difficulties ranked number one in terms of frequency and intensity out of a list of twenty-two potential work-related stressors on a national study by Matteson and Ivancevich of over 450 medical technologists. A specific type of communication problem was lack of feedback about job performance. Other included horizontal communication between co-workers, faulty communication and nonexistent communication.

Organizational stressors include work underload, and overload, responsibility for people as opposed to responsibility for things and the degree of decision-making and participation in authority.

The first of these, work underload and overload, refers to a persistence of the condition, not just an occasional state. The overload or underload may be of a quantitative (too much or too little to do) or qualitative (too difficult or too easy to do) nature. Generally, quantitative is the most prevalent contributor to burnout.

Responsibility for people has been positively associated with high blood pressure and heart disease, while responsibility for things has been negatively associated with the same. In general, the more responsibility the worker has, the greater the probability

of heart disease according to a study by R. L. Kahn.

Decision-making may relate to stress in a variety of ways. Wolf and Finestone reported a correlation between stress and lack of control. Their studies indicated that a low margin for decision-making is a significant risk factor for myocardial infarction.

While forced participation in decision-making may create stress, voluntary participation may reduce it. A study by S. E. Jackson suggests that participation in decision-making may reduce stress levels because it reduces role conflict and role ambiguity, two factors which have been positively linked to stress.

How do these occupational stressors relate to a principal? When examining the complex middle management position within the school system which an elementary principal has, it is easy to see the potential for high levels of stress. The very position of the principal as a middle manager between superiors who demand improved performance and dictate policy and subordinates who demand that their needs be met and wants some level of involvement in decision-making, makes it potentially one of the most difficult and demanding levels of work in school administration. B. J. Fallon shared this viewpoint when she opened her article on administrative stress with the following words: "no area of education imposes more stress than that of the public school principalship." The National Association of Elementary School Principals' (NAESP) 1988 study of elementary and middle school principals reported that the typical K-8 principal is on a 217 day annual contract and works a forty-five office hour week with six additional hours per week spent on school-related activities. The average work day is nine hours long. The report

estimated that approximately 80 percent of a principal's average workday is involved with interpersonal contacts. A principal averages thirteen different activities per day. Eighty-five percent of these activities are of short duration, consuming less than nine minutes. Almost half the activities are initiated by other people. Approximately twenty-five percent of the K-8 principals work day is devoted to supervising and evaluating teacher, seventeen percent to disciplining and managing students, and eleven percent on developing curriculum. These figures suggest that elementary principals may experience occupational stressors from the organizational stressors of work overload as well as interpersonal stressors of communication difficulties.

Some California elementary year-round school principals have complained about an increase in their workload when going on year-round education. They have specifically stated that they need more clerical help. J. Johnson's study substantiated these complaints by the observation that elementary year-round school principals were given greater workloads in all administrative areas with the implementation of year-round education. These principals reported great increases in professional growth, and pupil and parent concerns. They also spent more time than traditional principals with outside activities and less time with curriculum instruction and staff. It has been likened to having three schools in one building with the same number of administrators. Every new track requires meticulous planning and paperwork. The two hardest times of the year for principals, the beginning and the end, occur every six weeks on some year-round education plans. This could increase the amount of stress and lead to more burnout among those

principals on year-round education (YRE).

A Summary of Complaints That Accompany the Implementation of YRE

1. Parent Complaints:

    a. their vacation schedules are upset

    b. difficulties getting their students to bed early enough on school nights in the summer

2. Staff and Faculty Complaints:

    a. difficulty changing classrooms

    b. support staff have difficulties scheduling their services

    c. supplies are depleated in the summer months

3. Principal Complaints:

    a. vacations are changed from blocks of time to a few days interspersed throughout the year

    b. during their vacation days they are interrupted by urgent calls from school staff during school hours

    c. the stressful beginning and end of school year are now occurring, to a lesser extent, every six to nine weeks

    d. the work continues to accumulate on their desks during vacation days

One principal from a YRS in Los Angeles put it this way: "Year-round school does not provide time for reflection, planning or evaluation. There is never an ending when one can look back and day; 'That was a job well done.'"

The procedures of my study included the following:

(1) Three assessment instruments were mailed to a stratified, random sample of 200 principals (100 from year-round school and 100 from the traditional calendar) out of the total 3,728 California elementary school principals listed in the California Public School Directory, 1988.

(2) The three assessment instruments were the Maslach Burnout Inventory, to measure burnout; The Principals' Stressful Activities List, to rate potentially stressful occupational activities; and the Demographic Item Survey, to collect information about demographic,

administrative, organizational and environmental items that have been related to stress and burnout.

(3) The Statistical Package for the Social Studies, (SPSSx) for analyzing the data of this study. The .01 level of significance was used to determine statistical significance for all hypotheses.

The MBI was designed to measure burnout among educators by analyzing scores of the three subscales; emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment. The Educators Survey includes twenty-two statements to be answered by using a Likert type scale ranging from zero (never) to six (everyday). The scoring reflects the philosophy that burnout is a continuous variable. One exhibits varying degrees of burnout rather than having or not having it. Therefore, the MBI reports three levels of burnout for each of the three subscales: high, moderate, and low corresponding respectively to the upper third of the scores, the middle third, and lower third on each subscale. Currently, there is no composite score or pattern of inventory subscores that categorizes the respondent as burned out. According to Maslach and Jackson, more empirical research needs to be done before such a categorization of total scores can be supported.

Therefore, the Maslach Burnout Inventory states that burnout is "a continuous variable, ranging from low to moderate to high degrees of experienced feeling."

A low degree of burnout is reflected by scores ranging from 0 to 16 on the Emotional Exhaustion subscale; from 0 to 8 on the Depersonalization subscale; and from 37 or over on the Personal Accomplishment subscale.

A moderate degree of burnout is reflected by scores ranging from 17 to 26 on the Emotional Exhaustion subscale; from 9 to 13 on the Depersonalization subscale; and from 31 to 36 on the Personal Accomplishment subscale.

A high degree of burnout is reflected by scores ranging from 27 or over on the Emotional Exhaustion subscale; from 14 or over on

the Depersonalization subscale; and from 0 to 30 on the Personal Accomplishment subscale.

The following nine statements comprise the subscale of emotional exhaustion:

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
6. Working with people all day is really a strain for me.
8. I feel burned out from my work.
13. I feel frustrated by my job.
14. I feel I´m working too hard on my job.
16. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.
20. I feel like I´m at the end of my rope.

The following five statements make up the subscale of depersonalization:

5. I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.
10. I´ve become more callous toward people since I took this job.
11. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
15. I don´t really care what happens to some students.
22. I feel students blame me for some of their problems.

The following eight statements constitute the subscale of personal accomplishment:

4. I can easily understand how my students feel about things.
7. I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.
9. I feel I´m positively influencing other people´s lives through my work.
12. I feel very energetic.
17. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.
18. I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.
19. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
21. In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.

Table 7 lists the Maslach Burnout Inventory categories of subscale scores as they were normed for educators. It should be noted that 50 percent of the respondents scored in the low category on Emotional Exhaustion, 89 percent on Depersonalization, and 83

percent on Personal Accomplishment. Thus, a majority of the principals reported low burnout levels. The MBI subscales scores indicate that the principals are reporting lower levels of burnout than most human service workers.

TABLE 7

Categorization of California Elementary School Principals
By Calendar and Level of Reported Burnout

Range	Maslach Burnout Inventory Subscale					
	Emotional Exhaustion		Depersonalization		Personal Accomplishment	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low						
EE (0-16)	69	50%				
DP (0-8)			122	89%		
PA (37 +)					115	84%
Moderate						
EE (17 - 26)	35	24%				
DP (9 - 13)			14	10%		
PA (36 - 31)					18	12%
High						
EE (27 +)	35	23%				
DP (14 +)			3	3%		
PA (0 - 30)					6	5%
Total	139	97	139	102	139	101
	Mean = 18.29 Moderate		Mean = 3.80 Low		Mean = 42 Low	

(Rounded to the nearest percentage)

Table 8 summarizes the statistical findings which answer the question, "Is there a difference in the levels of perceived burnout between elementary school principals working under a traditional calendar and those working under a year-round education plan?" Given these results it is concluded that California public elementary school principals from traditional school calendars and those from YRE calendars report comparable levels of burnout with regard to Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment.

TABLE 8

Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance Comparing Elementary School Principals Working Under a Traditional Calendar and Those Working Under a Year-Round Education Plan On Reported Burnout

Dependent Variables	Calendar Means: YRE (n=69)	Calendar Means: Traditional (n=70)	Univariate F-Ratios
Emotional Exhaustion	16.84	19.71	2.67
Depersonalization	3.58	4.00	.42
Personal Accomplishment	42.51	41.54	.96

Overall Multivariate $F = 1.03$, $p = .38$

Tables 9 and 10 outline the results of the tests used to answer the question, "Is there a difference between the reported levels of burnout and the selected demographic, administrative and

organizational factors in year-round and traditional calendars?" Only one demographic factor, preschool children, revealed a significant association with principal burnout level. Table 11 further explores the relationship between the dependent variables, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment and principals with preschool children. A difference exists between principals with preschool children and other principals on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization means which chance alone cannot explain. Principals with preschool children report significantly higher Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization levels than those principals who do not have preschool children.

TABLE 9

Multivariate Analyses of Variance of Reported Burnout Among Elementary Principals Between Levels of Twenty Selected Demographic Factors

Independent Variables	Overall Multivariate F-ratio	p-value
a. Gender: male (n=79), female (n=59)	.51	.67
b. Age: 31-40 (n=19), 41-50 (n=50), 51+ (n=69)	1.70	.12
c. Education: bachelor's (n=6), master's (n=113), doctorate (n=18)	.86	.53
d. Marital Status: single (n=9), married (n=112), separated (n=2), divorced (n=15)	.80	.62
e. Number of Children Living at Home: 0 (n=76), 1 (n=21), 2-3 (n=36), 4+ (n=5)	.61	.79
f. Preschool Children: Yes (n=9), No (n=131)	3.83	.01**
g. K-6 Children: Yes (n=30), No (n=110)	.49	.69

TABLE 9 (CON'T)

Independent Variables	Overall Multivariate F-ratio	p-value
h. Middle School Children: Yes (n=15, No (n=125)	2.88	.04
i. High School Children: Yes (n=18), No (n=122)	.18	.91
j. School Enrollment: 299 or less (n=10), 300-399 (n=12), 400-499 (n=17), 500-599 (n=15), 600-699 (n-19), 700-799 (n=21), 800-99 (n-18), 1000+ (n=26)	1.50	.07
k. Years of Service as a Principal: less than 2 (n=13), 2-5 (n=44), 6-9 (n=21), 10-19 (n=41), 20+ (n=19)	.42	.96
l. Years at Current School: less than 2 (n=46), 2-5 (n=63), 6-9 (n=13), 10+ (n=15)	.96	.47
m. Block Vacation: Yes (n=83), No (n=57)	.57	.65
n. Flexible Vacation: Yes (n=61), No (n=2)	1.26	.29
o. Length of Vacation Accumulated This Year: 0 (n=1), 2 weeks (n=23), 3 weeks (n=21), 4 weeks (n=32), 5 weeks + (n=52)	.64	.81
p. Days of Vacation Accumulated This Year: 0-9 (n=23), 10-18 (n=27), 10-18 (n=27), 19--170 (n=21)	.29	.94
q. Total Days of Vacation Accumulated: 0-8 (n=24), 9-29 (n=19), 30-38 (n=12), 40-400 (n=22)	.76	.61
r. Vice Principal: Yes (n=72), No (n=68)	.32	.81
s. Number of Vice Principals: 1 (n=46), 2 (n=3), 3 (n=4)	.92	.49
t. Type of School Setting: urban (n=69), suburban (n=55), rural (n=12), other (n=1)	.66	.74

** $p < .01$

TABLE 10

Multivariate Analyses of Variance of Burnout Among Elementary YRE Principals Between Levels of Administrative and Organizational Factors in YRE Calendar

Independent Variables	Overall Multivariate *F*-ratio	*p*-value
1. Type of YRE Plan: 45-15 Staggered (n-21), 45-15 Block (n=10), 90-30 (n=3), 60-20 (n=16), Concept 6 (n=8), other (n=7)	.33	.99
2. Additional Administrative Help Added When District Converted to YRE: 0 (n=48), 1 (n=9), 2 (n=4)	1.11	.36
3. Parental Option of Child's Track: Yes (n=45), No (n=13)	.25	.86
4. Administrative Option of YRE of Traditional Calendar: Yes (n-22), No (n=43)	.18	.91
5. Personal Involvement with the Changeover From Traditional Calendar to YRE: Yes (n=41), No (n=24)	.34	.80
6. Level of Personal Involvement in the Changeover: Very (n=38), Somewhat (n=4)	.76	.52

TABLE 11

Univariate Analyses of Variance Burnout Between Elementary Principals Without Preschool Children Living at Home

Dependent Variable	Group Means: With Preschool Children (n=9)	Group Means: Without Preschool Children (n=130)	Univariate F-Ratio	p-value
Emotional Exhaustion	27.00 High	17.68 Moderate	7.02	.01**
Depersonal-ization	7.33 Moderate	3.55 Low	8.86	.00**
Personal Accomplishment	41.11 Low	42.08 Low	.24	.63

** $p < .01$ (df = 1/137)

Table 16 examines the relationship between the ten stressful activities named on the Principal´s Stressful Activities List and the two different school calendars. It lists the frequency distribution and means of the principal´s responses to the Principals´ Stressful Activities List. Notice that the means on all ten activities cluster between 2.44 and 3.35 which indicate occasionally stressful to moderately stressful ratings. The principals may be generally categorized as having moderately stressful activities with a combined mean of 2.96.

TABLE 16
Percentage of Frequency
of Stress on the Principals' Stressful Activities List

Stressful Activity Number	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	16	40	31	11	2	2.44
2	6	28	33	23	11	3.04
3	7	20	22	33	18	3.35
4	5	25	36	23	12	3.13
5	9	23	31	26	11	3.07
6	8	28	35	18	11	2.96
7	7	20	23	23	27	3.44
8	14	32	35	19	1	2.62
9	17	38	29	12	3	2.45
10	12	17	29	29	13	3.14

n = 133
(Rounded to the nearest tenth)

Legend for Numerical Rating of Stressful Activities

1 = not stressful, 2 = occasionally stressful, 3 = moderately stressful, 4 = often stressful, 5 = extremely stressful

1. Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls
2. Trying to resolve parent/school conflict
3. Trying to complete reports and other paperwork on time
4. Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that you know (colleagues, staff members, etc.)
5. Feeling that meetings take up too much time
6. Complying with state, federal and organizational rules and policies
7. Feeling that you have too heavy a workload, one that you cannot possibly finish during the normal work day
8. Evaluating staff members' performance
9. Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs
10. Imposing excessively high expectations on myself

Table 17 gives the results of the test which compared the responses of the principals from the two different calendars on the stressful administrative activities. It indicates that principals did differ in their perception of one of the stressful activities across calendar. An examination of the table shows that Stress 6 (complying with rules and policies) significantly differed across calendar. Principals from a traditional calendar find this activity more stressful than those from YRE. None of the other stressful activities had significantly different stress means across calendar.

TABLE 17

Multivariate Analysis of Variance Comparing Stressful Activities of Principals From a Traditional Calendar to Those From a Year-Round Education Plan

Dependent Variables	Group Means: YRE (n=64)	Group Means: Traditional (n=69)	Univariate F-Ratios	p-value
Stress 1	2.41	2.48	.19	.66
Stress 2	2.86	3.20	3.40	.07
Stress 3	3.23	3.46	.88	.35
Stress 4	3.22	3.04	.80	.37
Stress 5	3.22	2.93	1.98	.16
Stress 6	2.70	3.20	6.72	.01**
Stress 7	3.34	3.54	.45	.50
Stress 8	2.66	2.58	.23	.64
Stress 9	2.41	2.49	.17	.68
Stress 10	3.19	3.09	.19	.67

Overall Multivariate $F = 1.95$ (df = 1/127), ** $p < .01$

1. Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls
2. Trying to resolve parent/school conflict
3. Trying to complete reports and other paperwork on time
4. Having to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people that you know (colleagues, staff members, etc.)
5. Feeling that meetings take up too much time
6. Complying with state, federal and organizational rules and policies
7. Feeling that you have too heavy a work load, one that you cannot possibly finish during the normal work day
8. Evaluating staff members' performance
9. Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs
10. Imposing excessively high expectations on myself

Findings to open-ended items on the Principals' Stressful Activities List are outlined as follows. Principals displayed

an awareness of stress reducing techniques in their written comments in answer to the following questions:

What accommodations do you use to help you cope with stress?

What coping strategies could you use, but you have not?

Please list other items that should be included in this list (of stressful activities),

In order to better analyze the responses to these questions, I combined responses into the main categories of physical, occupational, interpersonal, intrapersonal and environmental and tallied the number of responses given to similar strategies or activities. A mark is one respondents handwritten mention of the strategy or activity. The principals were not restricted in the number of answers they could give to a question on this open-ended section. The results of these findings are discussed below by question.

The respondents listed fifty-six different strategies which they use to cope. These strategies collectively received 223 marks. The greatest number of marks went to items that dealt with physical coping strategies. The most popular were the following: exercise (26 marks), hobbies/outside activities (13 marks), sports activities (9 marks), walking (6 marks), and jogging (5 marks). Thus, physical coping strategies received twenty-six percent of the marks.

Occupational coping strategies received thirteen percent of the marks. The following items were the major ones mentioned in this ares: setting priorities/time management (14 marks), delegating duties (7 marks), and taking little work home (7 marks).

Interpersonal coping strategies received fifteen percent of the marks. The most popular items mentioned in this category

were sharing problems with associates (17 marks), sharing problems with friends (3 marks), and sharing problems with family (7 marks). Seven principals even stated that they choose interacting with students as a way of releasing stress.

Intrapersonal coping strategies include the following main items: humor (9 marks), and positive mental attitude (8 marks). Quiet personal activities which were mentioned were reading (7 marks), listening to music (4 music), and eating (4 marks).

Changing their environment through traveling or vacations, both long and short, were very popular coping strategies mentioned by the elementary school principals. Seven percent gave it as their way of releasing stress.

The number of items listed as possible coping strategies which could be used, but were not, was less than the number of coping strategies which the principals did, in fact, use; thirty-seven as opposed to fifty-six. The thirty-seven strategies received seventy-two collective marks. Physical exercise headed the list with nineteen marks, followed by more vacation (11 marks), time management (7 marks), changing jobs/transfer (4 marks), and limiting access to people (3 marks).

When principals were asked to list other stressful activities that had not been included on the Principals' Stressful Activities List, many simply repeated variations of those on the list. Forty-eight separate, though in some cases duplicates from the list, activities were given 102 collective marks. The one activity which received the most support was trying to resolve student/family problems (13 marks). The second most frequently mentioned stressful activity was student discipline (10 marks) followed by lack of

central office support (7 marks), and multi-track year (6 marks). Pressure from supervisors and budgetary concerns tied (5 marks), as did teachers' unions and poorly trained staff (4 marks). Salary was only mentioned once under the additional stressors and once as an unused coping strategy. Personal problems, such as marital concerns were also conspicuous in their absence.

This presentation gave the statistical findings of my study which can be summarized as follows:

1. California public elementary school principals from YRS did not differ in their reported levels of burnout on the three MBI subscales from those on a traditional calendar.

2. The reported levels of burnout among elementary school principals from both calendars did not significantly differ on the Demographic Item Surveys except for those with preschool children living at home. Principals from both calendars with preschool children reported experiencing higher levels of burnout on both the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales of the MBI. This finding does not imply a causal relationship between the independent variable of preschool children living at home and the dependent variable of burnout levels. Caution should be noted on these findings because of the small number of principals in this group (nine).

3. Though principals working under a traditional calendar reported significantly higher stress from complying with state, federal and organizational rules and policies, there were no other significant differences on the Principals' Stressful Activities List between principals from YRE and those from a traditional calendar. Perhaps the California State Department of Education's Alternative Educational Services Division with a YRE coordinator and consultant has provided extra support to YRE school principals in complying with state rules and policies which the principals from traditional calendar schools did not receive.

4. Burnout levels of California public elementary school principals were generally regarded as low by the MBI. Two of the subscales means, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment are in the low range, while the third, Emotional Exhaustion, is in the lower section of the moderate range.

The above findings were of a quantitative nature; whereas, the findings given below are more of a qualitative one. They were taken from the principals' handwritten comments to open-ended statements on the Principals' Stressful Activities List. Their responses are summarized below.

1. The principals displayed an awareness of a wide variety of stress reducing techniques.

2. Physical coping strategies are the most popular coping strategies used by those principals who reported and at the same time are also the most neglected by others who responded.

3. The principals basically agreed that the Principals' Stressful Activities List included the main stressful activities which they experience.

4. If the principals were to add to the Principals' Stressful Activities List their main addition would be trying to resolve student/family problems.

The following conclusions were drawn:

1. Conditions unique to YRS do not exist which contribute to higher reported levels of burnout among YRS principals.

2. California public elementary school principals have lower subscale scores on the MBI, especially the Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment subscales, than do the overall sample of workers in the norming group of the MBI. The overall sample occupational subgroups include teaching, other education social services, medicine, mental health and other (legal aid employees, attorneys, police officers, probation officers, minister, librarians, and agency administrators). The overall sample had a mean on the Emotional Exhaustion subscale of 20.99, Depersonalization, of 8.73, and Personal Accomplishment of 34.58. The mean subscores of the MBI subscales for this study (shown on Table 8) are Emotional Exhaustion, 18.29; Depersonalization, 3.80; and Personal Accomplishment, 42.

3. The only demographic item from the survey which appears to contribute to significantly different (higher) reported levels of burnout among California public elementary school principals are preschool children living at home.

4. The stressful activities of resolving parent/school conflict, imposing excessively high personal expectations, work overload, evaluating staff members' performance and telephone call interruptions are good predictors of burnout levels.

What factors may have contributed to the findings of low levels of burnout across calendar, demographic items and stressful activities among California public elementary school principals? The possible influence of general public knowledge on coping strategies, monetary motive as a tenor of the times, decentralization of California school districts, lack of

longitudinal studies of California year-round schools and burnout, insensitive assessment instruments for measuring burnout, and nonrespondents undetermined levels of burnout are plausible factors.

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